

XII. *A Letter from Richard Brocklesby
M. D. and F. R. S. to the President, con-
cerning the Indian Poison, sent over from
M. de la Condamine, Member of the Royal
Academy of Sciences at Paris.*

Honoured Sir,

Read Feb. 5. 1746-7. **T**HE Subjects of Natural History are often strange and uncommon ; but the Authors who have treated on them have not failed, on their Parts, to support and raise the Wonder, and once conceived Astonishment, by ascribing Properties which never existed in Nature ; thus indulging the Humour of finding a Marvellous in all Things, Truths have been greatly obscured, and Errors propagated without Number.

It is to this Cause originally (if I mistake not) we are to ascribe the prodigious Multiplicity of Poisons, and that equally numerous Tribe of Antidotes, treated of by the Ancients in their *Materia medica* ; and I should be very glad to have found modern Authors always just to Truth, in the Qualities by them ascrib'd to particular Drugs.

Upon hearing lately Part of Mr. *Juan Antonio de Loa's* Letter to you, Sir, I was suspicious Mr. *de la Condamine* had taken some Facts there upon the Authority of others, or else had been himself a little too much addicted to that general Byas of Mankind, the Love of Prodigy and Wonder.

In

In order to be better satisfy'd, I dissolv'd, in a certain Quantity of fair Water, as much of the *Indian* Poison as could be suspended, and let it stand to clear 24 Hours; and, having made a superficial Incision with a Lancet into the Nose of a young Cat, a few Drops were sprinkled on the Wound. The Creature at first discover'd no Marks of Injury receiv'd; yet in half an Hour she seem'd, by mewing more than before, to be sensible of some Pain. Thus she remain'd about 20 Minutes; when at length she shiver'd, was sleepy, soon became convuls'd, and, in about half an Hour, her Limbs were flaccid, and her Belly swell'd. These Symptoms continu'd, till she in a short time expir'd.

Some time pass'd, e'er I sat down to inquire what visible Effects had been produced on the Body. I then separated the Head from its Trunk, and carefully examin'd the Brain, and particularly the Origin of the Nerves; but when I had consider'd it thoroughly, I could not discover any preternatural Appearance in any of these Parts. Having spent near half an Hour in this Inquiry, I open'd the *Thorax*, and, with some Surprize, found the Pulsation of the Heart as regular, as if the Animal were in perfect Health. This Appearance continu'd above two Hours after the Cat's Head was off; but afterwards languish'd, and was much weaker.

I then open'd one Ventricle of the Heart, in which the Blood was somewhat coagulated. This may be thought to be partly owing to the Medicine; for, soon after it had produc'd Convulsions in the Creature, I had a Mind to see what Bleeding would do,

and with that View cut off the Tail; but, contrary to my Expectation, the Arteries that supply it with Blood bled very little; and, upon cutting off the Head, the Carotids and both Vertebrales did not pour out above half a common Spoonful.

But as it might be question'd by some, from the Continuance of the Heart's Pulsation, whether the Cat might not possibly, if let alone, have recover'd, I pour'd a few Drops of the same Solution as before into a superficial Wound of a young Dog, weighing 12 Pounds: The Creature, in less than an Hour, shiver'd, became sleepy, was very cold, and so stupid, that he suffer'd himself to be often burnt by the hot Ashes beneath the Grate, where he lay for Warmth.

In this comatous Way he continu'd near four Hours, and then shook off his *Stupor*, and was much better. I left him all Night, and found him next Morning quite well, and as hungry as ever. Upon this I made an Incision at that time into one of the crural Veins, and pour'd a few Drops of the Solution into it: In less than 10 Minutes the Dog gave Signs of great Pain, soon shiver'd, grew cold, was convuls'd, and in less than 20 Minutes died.

Upon opening him nothing uncommon was found, nor was the Blood in this Creature's Heart so thick as in the former. The crural Vein did not bleed from a large Orifice, after the Poison was infused, though it was likely to do it before.

But, as some Authors have said, that Birds in particular are instantly deprived of Life, if the least
Particle

Particle of certain Poisons are infused into the Blood, I had a Mind to try one Experiment, and to this End infused a few Drops of our Solution into a cuticular Wound of a small Bird. This occasion'd hanging of the Feathers, and a *Stupor*, in less than 10 Minutes, and kill'd him in somewhat more than fifteen.

I gave about two Drachms of Sugar to another Bird of the same kind, and shortly afterwards pour'd a little of the Solution into its Mouth; but two Drops had scarce touch'd his Tongue before the Creature was convuls'd, and I could with Difficulty lay him down before all Motion was taken away.

I gave these two Birds to two Cats; and whether from eating them or not I don't pretend to say, the Cats made so uncommon a Noise the whole Night, that they disturb'd the Family's Rest.

From these Experiments we find that the supposed Specific is of no manner of Use, even when the Poison is only taken at the Mouth; and from them it may appear probable, that our Poison is nearly upon the same Footing with white Arsenic in the Cure of the Tooth ach.

Thus, Sir, having satisfied myself, I thought I could do no less than give you an Account of the Result of my Trials. If they contain'd any thing that could afford you any Pleasure, ten times the Trouble I have taken would be amply repaid; but as the Subject itself is far from the most entertaining, and I am conscious that others may have carried it on to much better Purpose, so I have nothing to plead
in

in Excuse of this Trouble, farther than that I have
the Honour to be with great Respect,

S I R,

London, Jan. 14.

1746-7.

Your most obliged,

and humble Servant,

Richard Brocklesby.

XIII. *A Letter from Mr. Richard Dunthorne,
to the Rev. Mr. Cha. Mafon, F. R. S. and
Woodwardian Professor of Nat. Hist. at
Cambridge, concerning the Moon's Motion.*

S I R,

Cambridge, Nov. 4. 1746.

Read Feb. 5.
1746 7.

I N the Preface to my lunar Tables, I
hinted, that one Use of publishing
those Tables would be, the assisting of Persons desirous
farther to rectify the lunar Astronomy, by enabling
them more readily to compare the *Newtonian* Theory
with Observations.

Since the Publishing those Tables, I have spent
some Time myself in that Comparison; and here
send you the Result, that you may communicate it
to the *Royal Society*, if you think it deserves to be
made public.

As the Motion of every secondary Planet must
partake of the Errors in the Theory of its primary,
I thought proper, before I undertook the Examina-
tion of the lunar Numbers, to compare those of the
Sun with Observations. I compared several Sets of
Mr.